



Update from U.S. Sen. John Cornyn

December 2005

Economy Continues To Grow

Despite the challenges posed by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, the American economy continues on a strong path. The Department of Labor reports that 215,000 new jobs were created during the month of November, with the unemployment rate on its way back down. And more than 4.4 million jobs have been created since May 2003. The American economy has responded to a series of potentially damaging events – the September 11th terrorist attacks, corporate management scandals, and hurricanes – with remarkable resilience.

Economic growth, too, continues its upward trend, increasing at an annual rate of 4.3 percent in the last quarter—the 10th straight quarter of growth higher than three percent. Consumer confidence is up, incomes are rising and manufacturing production continues to expand. By any measure, this is a booming economy. And I'm confident that as we foster an environment where America's entrepreneurial spirit can thrive—by keeping taxes low, reducing the deficit and reforming civil justice—Texans will continue this welcome growth.

Border Security and Immigration Reform

I had the opportunity to travel to Laredo on December 2 to chair a field hearing at Texas A&M International University. The forum was an opportunity to discuss pending passport requirements, and to find solutions to the concerns raised about their impact in Texas and elsewhere along the border. It was an important chance to review the government's Western Hemisphere Travel Document Initiative and how the proposed passport rules, scheduled to go into effect next year, will impact trade and tourism. I believe that government officials who create regulations affecting the border should actually go to the border and see the impact and hear from constituents before any final decisions are made.

President Bush's recent travels throughout the border region to discuss the importance of border security to immigration reform provided a much-needed boost to our efforts. While border security is a critical first step in reforming our current system, it cannot be the last. Only comprehensive reform will provide the viable, long-term solution we seek.

The major immigration reform proposal I introduced with Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona will be at the center of the upcoming Senate debate. This effort must start with enforcement of the law. We cannot expect anyone to support immigration reform efforts unless we demonstrate our dedication to enforce existing immigration laws. We cannot continue to view our immigration laws as mere guidelines.

Our proposal addresses enforcement through a layered approach – control of the border, accountability in the workplace, and robust enforcement in the interior. Dramatic increases in Border Patrol personnel and equipment, increased resources devoted to technology and infrastructure, and expedited removal – all of this combined will stem the tide of illegal immigrants, drugs and violence. These efforts will be supported by expanded detention facilities, increased court resources to process and remove violators, and improved partnerships between local law enforcement and federal immigration officials. My legislation also includes a push for electronic worker verification which will make it possible for employers to ensure that their workers are legal.

These aren't easy goals, but they must be achieved. For details on my proposal, please visit [here](#).

While we all agree that we have a responsibility to protect our borders and to know who crosses through the ports of entry, the process needs to be done in a manner that has the least impact on legitimate travelers, on businesses and on tourism. I will continue working to ensure that this process is as comprehensive as necessary, while creating as little disruption as possible.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/immigration/>

The War on Terror and Operation Iraqi Freedom

By any measure of history, the nation of Iraq has made remarkable political progress in the past two years, and America must remain engaged in stabilization efforts in order to ensure the triumph of democracy over the return to tyranny. To finish the work there, we must stay the course. We must not lose our resolve. Withdrawal from Iraq should be determined solely upon when adequate security can be established by our military commanders and brave coalition forces.

On December 15, the Iraqi people will vote to elect a formal government. While much remains to be done, much has been accomplished. To ignore these strides forward would be to disregard the remarkable work of the Iraqi people and the United States contributions to their efforts. The politicians who yield to the temptation to politicize this issue run the risk of not only dividing their fellow Americans, but also of demoralizing the brave men and women in uniform and the noble cause they defend.

America has sacrificed much in this global war, and we can be certain that further trials lie ahead. But we can also be confident that in the midst of this struggle and sacrifice, there is hope. We are encouraging democracy, freedom, progress, free markets, self governance and the rule of law, and the Iraqi people are reaching out and taking hold of that hope. And so we must stand, confident and strong, shoulder-to-shoulder with the Iraqi people, in the defense of democracy, confident that freedom will triumph.

The Supreme Court of the United States

The Senate is set to consider the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito, Jr., in early January. Consensus is rapidly growing that Judge Alito is highly qualified, extremely fair, and a man of unquestioned integrity. It will be extremely difficult for the President's opponents to filibuster Judge Alito – the Senate Minority Leader himself has said that Judge Alito's confirmation process should be 'civil and respectful.' I agree with that sentiment, and agree that it's important to look closely at a nominee's record. One important component of a respectful confirmation process is respect for the *truth*. Democrats have attacked Judge Alito by distorting and mischaracterizing this man and his impeccable qualifications, even while his nomination continues to receive praise from people across the political spectrum. I will continue to do my part to set the record straight, defend this fine nominee, and work to ensure a fair hearing process, followed by an up-or-down vote. For more information, please visit [here](#).

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/SCOTUS/>

Come By and Say Hello

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. Every Tuesday that the Senate is in session, I host an open house in my office – Room 625 in the Hart Senate Office Building, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m., so I can visit with my fellow Texans. Please call Alisa Merritt at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn